REMARKS

The examiner's action dated May 22, 2006, has been received, and its contents carefully noted.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, claim 1 has been amended to state explicitly that the means are coupled to the drip valve. However, it is submitted that this amendment, which has been made in order to advance prosecution, is not necessary to define the invention over the prior art, or to completely define the iron according to the invention. Claim 1, as originally filed, clearly stated that the means are provided to act on the drip-preventing valve, from which it would implicitly follow that the means are coupled to that valve.

The rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 is traversed on the grounds that the application claims, and particularly independent claim 1, both as originally presented and as now amended, distinguish patentably over the applied reference.

The present invention is directed to a novel steam pressing iron that includes, as explicitly recited in claim 1, both a drip preventing valve and an adjustable drip device. These are defined in claim 1, and disclosed in the specification, as two separate structural components. A drip preventing valve is, by definition, and as disclosed in the present specification, a device that halts the flow of water when the steam chamber is insufficiently hot, in order to avoid spattering of water on items being ironed (specification, page 1, lines 8-11). On the other hand, a drip device acts to control the flow of water toward the steam chamber when the steam chamber is at a temperature sufficient to convert the water into steam (specification, page 1, lines 3-7).

poor drip preventing operation and/or a poor adjustment of the rate of generation of steam as a function of temperature.

In contrast, in the iron according to the present invention, the separation of the drip preventing function from the drip device function makes possible the provision of a control element, for example a bimetallic blade, for the drip-preventing valve, so that this element can react quickly and precisely to the critical temperature at which undesired dripping would occur.

In addition, the solution according to the invention can be utilized in any irons having a manual regulation of the quantity of steam, and not necessarily only in irons in which the supply of steam is regulated automatically.

It will thus be seen that the applied reference does not disclose an iron having the structural features according to the present invention, as defined in claim 1, and does not disclose the solution offered by the present invention, which is the combination of the drip-preventing valve and a drip device in series. It thus follows that this reference does not disclose a drip device having means "for opening or maintaining open the drip-preventing valve" when it is placed in the self-cleaning position.

It is therefore submitted that the application claims, and particularly claim 1, clearly define an iron that is not disclosed in the applied reference. It is therefore requested that the prior art rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn, that claims 1-6 be allowed and that the application be found in allowable condition.

Thus, these are two separate devices which, as defined in claim 1, are connected together in series. The applied reference does not disclose such a combination, primarily because it does not disclose a separate drip-preventing device.

The iron disclosed in this reference includes a water reservoir and a water circuit connecting the reservoir to a steam chamber. The iron includes an adjustable drip-device that is capable, in a self-cleaning position, of opening to allow a free passage toward the steam chamber.

However, the iron disclosed in this reference does not have a separate drip preventing valve, and thus does not have such a valve in series with a drip device, as specifically defined in claim 1 of the present application.

In effect, in the iron disclosed in the applied reference, the opening of the drip device is controlled automatically by bimetallic blades that give the drip device a drip preventing function. It is thus quite clear that this reference does not disclose an iron having a drip-preventing valve, and particularly a drip-preventing valve connected in series with a drip device.

In the iron disclosed in the applied reference, in which the bimetallic blades assure, at the same time, the drip-preventing function and the drip device operation at steaming temperatures, it is, in fact, very difficult to provide bimetallic blades that, at the same time, react effectively at low temperatures to rapidly close the valve, and thus prevent dripping, and whose deformation can be sufficiently controlled at higher temperatures to assure a precise regulation of the drip device function and thus of the rate of supply of steam. Thus, this arrangement produces a

If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,
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